

AMHERST/LA PAZ CENTRO SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Minutes

May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

PRESENT: Paul Baker, Liz Etheridge, Olivia Feyre Febonio, Victoria Febonio, Nancy Milch, Kathy and Walter Mullin, Mary Santiago, Anne and Ed Stanek, Carol Wood.

COFFEE SALES:

We have sold coffee for three nights of Town Meeting, from which we have made \$130 in profit. Town Meeting may last through May 21<sup>st</sup>.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

After paying all our present bills, we will have \$7083.77 in our account.

Mary just wired an additional amount of \$989 to cover the following:

- |                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Community Development Program | \$115 |
| 2. Clean Barrio Program          | \$250 |
| 3. Books                         | \$522 |
| 4. Math Tutor for March – June   | \$102 |

Kathy pointed out that there is a lot of money being spent on photocopying. Carol Wood mentioned that when she was in Africa, she found that photocopying was very expensive, too. Liz will check with the Peace Corps worker about photocopying costs in Nicaragua. We wondered if it would be worth sending paper with Mary and Liz and/or the Delegation.

Kathy would like to do a summary for an annual budget report after which we could have a discussion as to what are our budget priorities. She hopes to have this report for the next meeting.

REPORT FROM JULIE NORTH, PEACE CORPS WORKER

Liz reports that Julie is very enthusiastic about working with our organization. She is happy to give us regular reports. She is teaching an English class in the Community Center every Saturday and is now adding a craft class on Tuesday afternoons, also in the Community Center.

We discussed the possibility of giving Julie ongoing financial support through our organization for projects that she gets started if they look promising. For instance,

we are really interested in the idea of sewing cloth bags in the hopes that someone in La Paz could potentially start their own bag sewing business.

Liz will follow up with Julie on the possibility that some of the Delegation could help with her English Classes while they are there in February.

Julie reports that one of the scholarship students – Dora – and her family is staying in the small building adjacent to the Community Center.

Liz will also ask Julie to check on whether the students need Graphing Calculators or if the less expensive and simpler calculators are enough.

## REPORT FROM JULIO

Mary reports that Julio mentioned that several students graduated this year and have passed the exam enabling them to get a free higher education. Mary will have specifics for us at the next meeting.

Julio also had some sad news – Andrea, one of the scholarship students, had to drop out of the program because she has developed leukemia. Nancy bought a card for her, which we signed and Kathy will send to her.

## LIZ AND MARY'S VISIT

Liz and Mary leave for La Paz Centro on June 9<sup>th</sup>. We had many questions and suggestions for them, which we appreciate is a lot to accomplish in just a few days. Nevertheless, here they are:

### **Students**

1. Liz and Mary will meet individually with each scholarship student and do the following:
  - a. Give them a questionnaire, which Walter will send out
  - b. Photograph them (with name tags, as they did last time!)
  - c. Ask them what they feel about the program, the tutoring, what they would like to see happen, anything that would help them to be successful, any concerns they have with the program, etc.
  - d. Ask for reflections on the last delegation and what kinds of activities, field trips they might like to see happen the next time. What did they think of the shadowing?
2. Meet with the graduated students and get their reflections and plans.
3. Meet with the principal at Pablo Sexto.

## **Banking**

1. Discuss the frozen account situation with Julio and try to figure out if he thinks it would help to get an attorney.
2. Kathy will again try to contact her niece, Emily's, husband who is in Nicaragua to see if he has any suggestions as to how we might progress on this account.

## **Receipts**

Mary will forewarn Julio that we are expecting a financial summary and receipts for everything since January of this year. We are particularly interested in Electric Bills.

We are still wondering if we need an accountant – perhaps that could be mentioned in conjunction with receipts and banking.

## **Community Center**

1. Who is living there now and how did Julio decide on this family?
2. What is the family doing in exchange for living there?
3. Are they paying for their electricity?
4. Should we consider giving the computers to another organization such as Casa Mujer so that they can be kept cleaner and are used?
5. Check on the cracks on the Rancho floor and find out how much it would cost to repair them.
6. Review the state of the porch – is it completed? If not, what needs to be done? If Julio still wants lattice work, what would be the purpose? If more money is needed, how much more?

## **Library**

1. Visit the library to explore possible projects for the delegation there.
2. Bring a stamp and stamp the books that we have donated. Liz reports that a stamp will cost \$27.50 and we need to shrink our logo to fit the stamp. It was suggested that we write something like: Doñado por Amherst, MA., USA. and draw a smaller tree next to it. Mary and Liz will take care of this design.
3. Find out if there are other books that would be useful which we might potentially fund.

## **Special Needs School**

Liz and Mary will try to visit this school to discuss what help they might need with training and what equipment they would like.

## **La Paz Centro Committee**

1. Liz and Mary will try to meet with the committee and get feedback on what is happening and what they would like to see happen.
2. Liz and Mary will also try to meet individually with the women we had identified as possible additions to the committee:
  - a. Anjela Hernandez
  - b. Nieves Lopez
  - c. Sandra Oporta
  - d. Rafaela Jiron

## **Gifts**

We would like to send gifts for the Scholarship Students, the Graduates and the LPC Committee Members. One suggestion is silkscreened cloth bags, made by us. Nancy is attending a group bag sewing session in Northampton on Wed, May 16<sup>th</sup>. She will report to us on that in time for us to sew some bags if that is practical.

It was suggested that “Barrio Limpio” might be a possible phrase to be printed on the bags.

Any other gift suggestions are welcome. We have sent cups and pens in the past.

## **POTLUCK PARTY**

Carol and Paul Baker will be moving to Maine at the end of the summer. We wanted to have a party for them and have decided that will be on

**Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm at the Staneks, 54 Carriage Lane.**

Anne will email everyone about food.

**NEXT MEETING is MONDAY, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> AT 7:30 PM IN THE LOWER INTERNAL MEETING ROOM OF THE BANGS CENTER.**

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Stanek

Chair